

IMPROVEMENT OF THE LAW OF PATENTS.

In the last number of the *Mechanics' Magazine* is a letter from BENJAMIN CHEYVERTON, Esq., "On the Velocity of Steam under different Pressures." The writer alludes incidentally to the inventions of Mr. PILBROW, and is thereby led to a consideration of the Patent Laws. The following sentences, with which the letter concludes, are well worthy of attention:—

"The fate of these two patent inventions of Mr. Pilbrow is a sad commentary on the state of the patent laws. Did they but admit, as might easily be imagined, of a twelve months' discussion and canvassing of the merits and of the originality of inventions, prior to the patents passing the great seal, and the greater part of the expenses being incurred, with the option of not proceeding beyond the first stage of a preliminary specification—did they but afford this opportunity, of making the inventions known to capitalists, and securing their co-operation without risk to the interests of the inventors; and also of ascertaining the nature of the inventions that were in the progress of being patented, without having, as now, either to wait till they are specified at the hazard of being anticipated by others, or to go forward, under perhaps reasonable apprehensions of having been already forestalled—what a world of anxiety, what a ruinous expense, what a wrecking of happiness would be spared to a class of men, who, to say the least, are the pioneers of society in the advancement of its material interests. Give me but this boon at a charge of five or ten pounds, and I would not care for the present heavy expenses attending patents—no, not even if they were doubled. Indeed, much may be said against, as well as in favour of, making patents cheap. The institutions of society, generally, have their birth and their continued existence only in a conflict of adverse interests and rights. But whilst in regard to their principles they must of necessity come into direct and palpable collision, it is all the more desirable that the working salient points should be rounded off, and that the crossing, jostling, and deflecting, inevitable to diverse and independent courses, should be effected without shock, and in a manner as smooth and as noiseless as possible. It appears to me, that in order to effect this improvement in the law of patents, little more is required than that a preliminary specification of the leading points of the invention should be enrolled and be open to public inspection—that it should not be substantially departed from in the final specification, without risking the validity of the patent—that it should, be introduced, much in the same manner and under the same conditions, except as to secrecy, as specifications are at present, I believe, occasionally called for by the Attorney General, in cases of opposition—that in case the patent pass the great seal, the rights of the patentee should date from the application to the Attorney General and the simultaneous enrolment of the preliminary specification, which surely would not be more anomalous than retrospective legislation—and that if, from the time of such application, the patent were not sealed within a twelvemonth, the invention should become public property; but in the interim may be guarded from invasion, by application to the Lord Chancellor for injunctions, &c., pending the time allowed for the establishment of the patent."

It is somewhat singular that the writer of the best book on the law of patents, Mr. GOSNELL, a man of high scientific attainments to boot, should have been in Parliament for years, and yet have done nothing for the amendment of the law which relates to property in inventions. The present Attorney General, whose office is so intimately connected with the administration of the law of patents, is also a man deeply versed in science, theoretical as well as practical; surely it would be an easy task for these gentlemen with their knowledge and influence, to frame and procure the enactment of a statute remedial of the evils with which experience must have made them so familiar. The time of the Attorney General is, undoubtedly, much taken up; but Mr. Godson, we venture to think, could find, or make, the requisite leisure for executing such a task, were he called upon. It is useless to throw out hints of improvement, unless they be followed up by some attempts to induce those who have power to bring them into operation. Were a meeting to be called, a document to be prepared, enumerating the evils of the present law and suggesting the remedies, and were that document to be presented by a deputation to both or either of the learned gentlemen we have named, there is very little doubt that they would gladly avail themselves of such an opportunity of benefiting their fellow-citizens, and doing honour to themselves.



The Rudston Monolith.



Stonehenge.

LECTURES ON ARCHITECTURE AND ANTIQUITIES.

ON THE ARCHITECTURE RECORDED IN SCRIPTURE.

WHEN the Israelites departed from Egypt and came to Mount Sinai, Moses was there instructed by the Almighty to make a tabernacle. As the people had yet to wander many years before they were to settle in one place, it is obvious that the tabernacle would have to be constructed in such a manner as to be easily transported wherever they went, and to be composed of materials best suited to that end. Accordingly, we find it planned in a manner to combine magnificence of decoration with simplicity of construction. The scriptural account and that of Josephus are exceedingly minute, though some passages are involved in great

obscurity. As the former account is within reach of all, it is perhaps only necessary to speak generally of this first temple of the Jews, which served in a great measure as the model for those more splendid and solid structures built by Solomon, Zerubbabel, and Herod. A court was planned 100 cubits in length (the cubit is generally reckoned at about 1 foot 9 inches), and 50 in width, within which area were set up 20 pillars on each side and 10 behind; these were of brass with silver capitals (capitres), their sockets were firmly fixed in the ground, and cords were passed through rings attached to the columns, and tied at their farther ends to brass nails of a cubit long, which at every pillar were driven into the floor, and would keep the tabernacle from being shaken by the violence of the winds; but a curtain of fine soft linen went round all the pillars, and hung down in a flowing